

Supporting a Healthier Base

Story and Photos by
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Air quality is important to the health and safety of personnel at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo.

While the base is currently lacking a skilled industrial hygienist to test the camp's air quality, the task has not been overlooked.

It had been taken up by a team comprised of personnel from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Europe District, the environmental office from the Directorate of Public Works, the Task Force MedFalcon Preventative Medicine, and the Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine.

Working with Soldiers from Task Force MedFalcon Preventative Medicine is not

something new for Greg Taylor, environmental specialist, Europe District. They cross paths frequently.

Members of this team work together whenever an air, soil or water sample needs to be processed. Taylor leads the team and identifies sites around the camp where they need to test the air quality.

"Greg's in charge. Basically, we're free labor," said Staff Sgt. Chad Baures, preventative medicine environmental health technician, 180th Medical Detachment at Camp Bondsteel.

This de facto team commonly jokes with each other, but are serious about maintaining the health of

everyone stationed at Camp Bondsteel.

Air sampling equipment is used to test the quality of the air, and sites set up around the camp



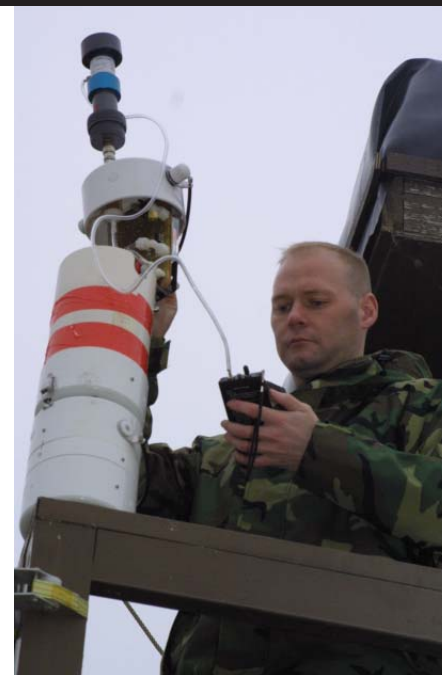
ABOVE: Greg Taylor, environmental specialist, Europe District, sets up a harness to hook air sampling equipment to.

LEFT: Clouds and fog settle over Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, which can hold pollutants in the air over the camp longer.





LEFT: Arsim Ymeri (left), hazardous waste specialist with contractor KBR and Greg Taylor, environmental specialist, Europe District, mark spots where soil samples need to be taken due to an oil spill.
RIGHT: Taylor checks the air sampling equipment before attaching it to a guard tower.
BOTTOM: A recent spill at this fuel point has led Taylor and Ymeri to test the soil around the area.



are used to help determine the impact of air curtain destroyers.

"These are basically big burn boxes," said Taylor, of the air curtain destroyers, which burn an array of trash including metals, glass, papers, plastics and Styrofoam.

There is little protection from the smoke that is let off because there's nothing filtering the smoke in the air curtain destroyers. The smoke can then travel to places around the camp, creating a possible health hazard, said Taylor.

On a day-to-day basis, the preventative medicine and

environmental offices most commonly take air samples, said Baures. All the samples' records are kept in the medical detachment's office.

The team is currently studying the air samples because there are guard towers located near the air curtain destroyers. These air samples will help the team find out what pollutants are being let into the atmosphere and what the possible threats are to people working at Camp Bondsteel. The study is also being conducted to find out the air curtain destroyers' environmental impact.

Leaders from the camp are pushing to find an alternative to burning because locals around the camp, as well as personnel, have complained about the fumes. One option being studied is to compost organic materials and recycle other materials instead of burning them. Besides the possible health benefits, there may be more advantages in not burning.

"When you burn, you get nothing," said Taylor. "When you compost, you get a product that you can use. When you recycle, you get a product that someone can use."